AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-55 (Cancelled)

Claim 56 (Currently Amended)   A voice output apparatus comprising:

a text display unit that displays a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

a delay determination unit that determines a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed by said text display unit, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed by said text display unit; ~~and~~

a voice output unit that outputs, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by said text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined by said delay determination unit has passed after the text message is displayed by said text display unit[[,]]; and

      a size obtainment unit that obtains a size of characters included in the displayed text message,

wherein said delay determination unit estimates the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained size of the characters and the delay time, such that:

~~determines that~~ the estimated delay time decreases as the ~~should be short in a case where a~~ obtained size of the characters increases ~~in the text message displayed by said text display unit is large~~; and

2

~~determines that the~~ estimated delay time increases as ~~should be long in a case where~~ the obtained size of the characters decreases ~~is small~~.

Claim 57 (Currently Amended)   A voice output apparatus comprising:

a text display unit that displays a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

a delay determination unit that determines a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed by said text display unit, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed by said text display unit; ~~and~~

a voice output unit that outputs, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by said text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined by said delay determination unit has passed after the text message is displayed by said text display unit[[,]]; and

_____ a distance obtainment unit that obtains a distance between a set focal point and the displayed text message, the set focal point being located on said text display unit and for attracting the user's attention,

wherein said delay determination unit estimates the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained distance and the delay time, such that:

~~determines that the~~ estimated delay time increases as the ~~should be long in a case where a~~ obtained distance increases ~~between a focal point and characters in the text message~~

3

~~displayed by said text display unit is long, the focal point being set on said text display unit for~~

~~attracting the user's attention~~; and

~~determines that the~~ estimated delay time decreases as ~~should be short in a case~~

~~where~~ the obtained distance decreases ~~is short~~.

Claim 58 (Currently Amended)   A voice output apparatus comprising:

a text display unit that displays a text message which is information to be transmitted to a

user;

a delay determination unit that determines a delay time according to a form of the text

message displayed by said text display unit, the delay time being a time necessary for an action

taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed by said

text display unit; ~~and~~

a voice output unit that outputs, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted,

such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by said text

display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined by said delay

determination unit has passed after the text message is displayed by said text display unit[[,]];

and

a contrast obtainment unit that obtains a contrast between a color at a position on said text

display unit and a color of characters included in the displayed text message,

wherein said delay time determination unit estimates the delay time based on a previously

determined relationship between the obtained contrast and the delay time, such that:

~~determines that the~~ estimated delay time decreases as the ~~should be short in the a~~

~~case where a~~ obtained contrast increases ~~between a color at a position on said text display unit~~

4

and a color of characters in the text message is large, such that the user's attention is drawn to the

position on said text display unit as a result of the contrast; and

determines that the estimated delay time increases as should be long in a case

where the obtained contrast decreases is small.

Claim 59 (Currently Amended)   A voice output apparatus comprising:

a text display unit that displays a text message which is information to be transmitted to a

user;

a delay determination unit that determines a delay time according to a form of the text

message displayed by said text display unit, the delay time being a time necessary for an action

taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed by said

text display unit; and

a voice output unit that outputs, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted,

such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by said text

display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined by said delay

determination unit has passed after the text message is displayed by said text display unit[[,]];

and

a flashing degree obtainment unit that obtains a degree of flashing of characters included

in the displayed text message,

wherein said delay determination unit estimates the delay time based on a previously

determined relationship between the obtained degree of flashing and the delay time, such that:

~~determines that the~~ <u>estimated</u> delay time <u>decreases as the</u> ~~should be short in a case where a~~ <u>obtained</u> degree of flashing <u>increases</u> ~~characters in the text message displayed by the text display unit is high~~; and

~~determines that the~~ <u>estimated</u> delay time <u>increases as</u> ~~should be long in a case where~~ the <u>obtained</u> degree of flashing <u>decreases</u> ~~is low~~.

Claim 60 (Currently Amended)   A voice output apparatus comprising:

a text display unit that displays a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

a delay determination unit that determines a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed by said text display unit, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed by said text display unit;

a voice output unit that outputs, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by said text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined by said delay determination unit has passed after the text message is displayed by said text display unit; and

a personal information obtainment that obtains an age of the user,

wherein said delay determination unit <u>estimates the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained age of the user and the delay time, such that</u>:

~~determines that the~~ <u>estimated</u> delay time <u>increases as</u> ~~should be long in a case where~~ the obtained age <u>increases</u> ~~is high~~; and

~~determines that~~ the estimated delay time decreases as ~~should be short in a case~~ ~~where~~ the obtained age decreases ~~is low~~.

Claim 61 (Currently Amended)   A voice output apparatus comprising:

a text display unit that displays a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

a delay determination unit that determines a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed by said text display unit, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed by said text display unit;

a voice output unit that outputs, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by said text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined by said delay determination unit has passed after the text message is displayed by said text display unit; and

a habituation specifying unit that obtains a number of times the user operates said voice output apparatus,

wherein said delay determination unit estimates the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained number of times of operation and the delay time, such that:

~~determines that~~ the estimated delay time decreases as ~~should be short in the a case~~ ~~where~~ the obtained number of times of operation increases ~~operations is large~~; and

~~determines that~~ the estimated delay time increases as ~~should be long in a case~~ ~~where~~ the obtained number of times of operation decreases ~~operations is small~~.

Claim 62 (Currently Amended)   A voice output apparatus comprising:

a text display unit that displays a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

a delay determination unit that determines a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed by said text display unit, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed by said text display unit;

a voice output unit that outputs, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by said text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined by said delay determination unit has passed after the text message is displayed by said text display unit; and

a habituation specifying unit that obtains an operation time during which the user operates said voice output apparatus,

wherein said delay determination unit estimates the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained operation time and the delay time, such that:

determines that the estimated delay time decreases as should be short in the a case where the obtained operation time increases is long; and

determines that the estimated delay time increases as should be long in a case where the obtained operation time decreases is short.

Claim 63 (Previously Presented)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 57, wherein said text display unit displays an agent as the focal point.

Claim 64 (Cancelled)

Claim 65 (Currently Amended)   A voice output method used by an information processing apparatus to output a voice message, said voice output method comprising:

displaying, on a text display unit, a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

determining a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed in said displaying, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed in said displaying; ~~and~~

outputting, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by the text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined in said determining has passed after the text message is displayed in said displaying~~[[,]]~~; and

obtaining a size of characters included in the displayed text message,

wherein said determining includes estimating the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained size of the characters and the delay time, such that:

~~determining that~~ the estimated delay time decreases as the ~~should be short in a case where a~~ obtained size of the characters increases ~~in the text message displayed in said displaying is large~~; and

~~determining that~~ the estimated delay time increases as ~~should be long in a case where~~ the obtained size of the characters decreases ~~is small~~.

9

Claim 66 (Currently Amended) A voice output method used by an information processing apparatus to output a voice message, said voice output method comprising:

displaying, on a text display unit, a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

determining a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed in said displaying, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed in said displaying; ~~and~~

outputting, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by the text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined in said determining has passed after the text message is displayed in said displaying[[,]]; and

obtaining a distance between a set focal point and the displayed text message, the set focal point being located on the text display unit and for attracting the user's attention,

wherein said determining includes estimating the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained distance and the delay time, such that:

~~determining that~~ the estimated delay time increases as the ~~should be long in a case where a~~ obtained distance increases ~~between a focal point and characters in the text message displayed in said displaying is long, the focal point being set on the text display unit for attracting the user's attention~~; and

~~determining that~~ the estimated delay time decreases as ~~should be short in a case where~~ the obtained distance decreases ~~is short~~.

10

Claim 67 (Currently Amended)   A voice output method used by an information processing apparatus to output a voice message, said voice output method comprising:

displaying, on a text display unit, a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

determining a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed in said displaying, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed in said displaying; ~~and~~

outputting, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by the text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined in said determining has passed after the text message is displayed in said displaying[[,]]; and

obtaining a contrast between a color at a position on the text display unit and a color of characters included in the displayed text message,

wherein said determining includes estimating the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained contrast and the delay time, such that:

~~determining that~~ the estimated delay time decreases as the ~~should be short in a case where a~~ obtained contrast increases ~~between a color at a position on the text display unit and a color of characters in the text message is large~~, such that the user's attention is drawn to the position on the text display unit as a result of the contrast; and

~~determining that~~ the estimated delay time increases as ~~should be long in a case where~~ the obtained contrast decreases ~~is small~~.

11

Claim 68 (Currently Amended)   A voice output method according used by an information processing apparatus to output a voice message, said voice output method comprising:

displaying, on a text display unit, a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

determining a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed in said displaying, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed in said displaying; ~~and~~

outputting, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by the text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined in said determining has passed after the text message is displayed in said displaying[[,]]; and

obtaining a degree of flashing of characters included in the displayed text message,

wherein said determining includes estimating the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained degree of flashing and the delay time, such that:

~~determining that~~ the estimated delay time decreases as the ~~should be short in a case where a~~ obtained degree of flashing increases ~~characters in the text message displayed in the text display unit is high~~; and

~~determining that~~ the estimated delay time increases as ~~should be long in a case where~~ the obtained degree of flashing decreases ~~is low~~.

Claim 69 (Currently Amended)   A voice output method used by an information processing apparatus to output a voice message, said voice output method comprising:

12

displaying, on a text display unit, a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

determining a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed in said displaying, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed in said displaying;

outputting, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by the text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined in said determining has passed after the text message is displayed in said displaying; and

obtaining an age of the user,

wherein said determining includes estimating the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained age of the user and the delay time, such that:

determining that the estimated delay time increases as should be long in a case where the obtained age increases is high; and

determining that the estimated delay time decreases as should be short in a case where the obtained age decreases is low.

Claim 70 (Currently Amended)   A voice output method used by an information processing apparatus to output a voice message, said voice output method comprising:

displaying, on a text display unit, a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

determining a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed in said displaying, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed in said displaying;

outputting, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by the text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined in said determining has passed after the text message is displayed in said displaying; and

obtaining a number of times the user operates the information processing apparatus,

wherein said determining includes <u>estimating the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained number of times of operation and the delay time, such that</u>:

<u>determining that</u> ~~determining that~~ the <u>estimated</u> delay time <u>decreases as</u> ~~should be short in a case where~~ the obtained number of <u>times of operation increases</u> ~~operations is large~~; and

<u>determining that</u> ~~determining that~~ the <u>estimated</u> delay time <u>increases as</u> ~~should be long in a case where~~ the obtained number of <u>times of operation decreases</u> ~~operations is small~~.

Claim 71 (Currently Amended)   A voice output method used by an information processing apparatus to output a voice message, said voice output method comprising:

displaying, on a text display unit, a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

determining a delay time according to a form of the text message displayed in said displaying, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed in said displaying;

outputting, via a voice message, the information to be transmitted, such that the output voice message represents the entire text message displayed by the text display unit, the voice message being output only when the delay time determined in said determining has passed after the text message is displayed in said displaying; and

obtaining an operation time during which the user operates the information processing apparatus,

wherein said determining includes estimating the delay time based on a previously determined relationship between the obtained operation time and the delay time, such that:

determining that the estimated delay time decreases as ~~should be short in a case where~~ the obtained operation time increases ~~is long~~; and

determining that the estimated delay time increases as ~~should be long in a case where~~ the obtained operation time decreases ~~is short~~.

Claim 72 (Previously Presented)   The voice output method according to claim 66, wherein said displaying includes displaying an agent as the focal point.